



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Observes National HIV Testing Day *Department of Health Urges Testing for At-Risk People*

BISMARCK, N.D. – In observance of National HIV Testing Day on June 27, the North Dakota Department of Health is urging people at risk for HIV/AIDS to get tested, according to Gino Jose, HIV Prevention Coordinator for the Department of Health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that over 1 million people 13 and older are living with HIV infection, including about 200,000 who are unaware of their infection. Over the past decade, the number of people living with HIV has increased, while the annual number of new HIV infections has remained relatively stable. Still, the pace of new infections continues at far too high a level— particularly among certain groups.

As of June 20, 2014, 365 people are currently living in North Dakota with HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that about one-fourth of the people infected with HIV are unaware they have HIV; as a result, these people may be unknowingly spreading their infection to others. That is why it is important for people to learn their HIV status by getting tested. Advances in medicine have made it possible for people who have HIV infection to live long healthy lives, and knowing your status sooner can help prevent poorer health outcomes.

HIV testing is available at testing sites throughout the state, and results are available in 20 minutes. The test sites are staffed by trained personnel who offer free and confidential HIV testing, counseling and referrals to those at risk. HIV can be prevented by avoiding or not engaging in risky behaviors, such as unprotected sex, needle-sharing for drug use, or tattooing and body piercing at unlicensed facilities.

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

For information about HIV testing and other HIV/AIDS services, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 1.800.472.2180 or visit the program's website at www.ndhealth.gov/hiv. Residents can also visit a website where they can identify their risk factors through an anonymous survey at <http://www.ndhealth.gov/knowyourrisk>.

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